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May 2, 1959

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT

I told the President this morning at Gettysburg of my conversations with General de Gaulle and with Prime Minister Debre.

to the President

He was particularly disturbed with regard to the Debre conversation and kept coming back to it from time to time, wondering whether or not this was likely to signal the beginning of the break-up of NATO. I told him we had made a draft of a suggested letter to de Gaulle but were planning not to send it to him until we had an appraisal by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Defense Department of the importance of the nine squadrons of aircraft now stationed in Paris for which the French Government refused to allow us to stockpile atomic weapons. The President said he wished to send a very strong letter to de Gaulle on this subject since he felt that, if we did not have a showdown now, we were likely to find the French holding out on necessary parts of our infrastructure which might well make our position untenable in Europe.

The President expressed the hope that our draft of a letter to de Gaulle could be sent to him at a very early moment and that he could have a condensed version of my conversation with Debre at the same time.



Christian A. Herter

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